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Improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat

Report of the Secretary-General

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Abbreviations

CICP	Centre for International Crime Prevention
DDA	Department for Disarmament Affairs
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
DGAACS	Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services
DHA	Department of Humanitarian Affairs
DM	Department of Management
DPA	Department of Political Affairs
DPI	Department of Public Information
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
DPKO/FALD	Department of Peacekeeping Operations/Field Administration and Logistics Division
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
INTERORG	Interorganizational bodies: Joint Inspection Unit Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions International Computing Centre Information Systems Coordination Committee
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OCSS	Office of Central Support Services
OHRM	Office of Human Resources Management
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
OLA	Office of Legal Affairs
OPPBA	Office of Programme Planning, Budgeting and Accounts
OSG	Office of the Secretary-General
UNCC	United Nations Compensation Commission
UNCHS	United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDCP	United Nations Drug Control Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFIP	United Nations Fund for International Partnerships
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNJSPF	United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund and the United Nations Staff Pension Committee
UNOG	United Nations Office at Geneva
UNOIP	United Nations Office of the Iraq Programme
UNON	United Nations Office at Nairobi
UNOV	United Nations Office at Vienna
UNSCOM	United Nations Special Commission established by the Security Council pursuant to Security Council resolution 687 (1991)

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 53/119 of 9 December 1998 on the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of the resolution, including by providing statistics on the number and percentage of women in all organizational units and at all levels throughout the United Nations system, to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-third session. In the same resolution, the General Assembly reaffirmed the goal of 50/50 gender distribution by the year 2000 in all categories of posts within the United Nations system, especially at the D-1 level and above, with full respect for the principle of equitable geographical distribution, in conformity with Article 101 of the Charter of the United Nations, and also taking into account the continuing lack of representation or under-representation of women from certain countries, in particular from developing countries as well as countries with economies in transition.

2. The Assembly also welcomed the ongoing personal commitment of the Secretary-General to meeting the goal of gender equality and his assurance that gender balance will be given the highest priority in his continuing efforts to bring about a new management culture in the Organization, which will include full implementation of the revised special measures for women outlined in the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly (see A/53/376, sect. III). The General Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to ensure that heads of departments and offices develop gender action plans that establish concrete strategies for the achievement of gender balance in individual departments and offices, and to ensure, as far as possible, that the appointment and promotion of women will not be less than 50 per cent until the goal of gender balance is met.

3. Due to the short time period between the fifty-third session of the General Assembly and the opening of the forty-third session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the present report updates information contained in the reports of the Secretary-General on the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (A/53/376) and the composition of the Secretariat (A/53/375). The report includes the latest statistics on the representation of women and men in the Secretariat and in the United Nations system organizations, as well as information on further developments and measures taken for the achievement of gender equality.

II. Statistical update

Gender distribution of staff at the Professional and higher levels in the United Nations Secretariat

4. Further to the General Assembly's decision to extend the target of 50/50 gender distribution in posts subject to geographical distribution by the year 2000 to all categories of posts, the present report (see tables 1–4) expands the statistical tables contained in the above-mentioned report on the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat to include information on the gender distribution of all staff in the Professional category and above with appointments of one year or more. Similarly, for the purpose of human resources planning, the staff population reviewed in the above-mentioned report on the composition of the Secretariat has been enlarged to include all Professional and higher-level staff with appointments of one year or more, in addition to the traditional and considerably smaller population of staff on appointments subject to geographical distribution.

5. Since 1 January 1998, the increase in the percentage of women on appointments subject to geographical distribution has been marginal, rising only from 36.8 per cent to 37.1 per cent. As of 30 November 1998, there were 893 women out of a total of 2,404 staff on geographical appointments, as compared to 885 women out of a total of 2,407 staff on geographical appointments on 31 December 1997. While the overall increase in women's representation has been slight, notable progress has been made in improving the representation of women on geographical appointments at the D-1 level. The number of women at this level has risen from 51 in December 1997 to 65 as of 30 November 1998. This corresponds to a significant increase in women's representation at the D-1 level, from 24.3 per cent in December 1997 to 31.3 per cent in November 1998. As of 30 November 1998, the percentage of women on appointments subject to geographical distribution at the D-1 level and above was 26.9 per cent.

6. With respect to the gender distribution of all Professional staff with appointments of one year or more, discernible progress in improving women's representation has been made since June 1998, when gender statistics on this larger population of staff were initially compiled. During the five-month period from 1 July 1998 to 30 November 1998, the number of women with appointments of one year or more increased from 1,441 to 1,481. As depicted in table 4, the percentage of women with appointments of one year

or more was 35.2 per cent as of 30 November 1998, compared to 34.6 per cent in June 1998.

7. The largest increases in the representation of women with appointments of one year or more have been at the senior and policy-making levels. The number of women at the D-1 level and above increased from 89 in June 1998 to 99 in November 1998. This corresponds to an increase in women's representation at these levels, from 21.2 per cent to 23.1 per cent.

8. The Secretary-General, in his report to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session, noted that the decline from June 1997 to June 1998 in the percentages of women promoted to the P-5 level (from 56.8 per cent to 35.6 per cent) and appointed at the P-5 level (from 55.6 per cent to 31.6 per cent) was of special concern. Although there has been a small increase in the number of women at the P-5 level since June 1998, the percentage of women at this level has declined further, both in the category of staff on geographical appointments and in the larger population of staff with appointments of one year or more. This is attributable to the considerably lower rate at which women are recruited and promoted to this level. During the period 1 January 1998–30 November 1998, only 23.5 per cent of the staff appointed at the P-5 level through the Appointment and Promotion Board were women. Of the staff promoted to the P-5 level through the Appointment and Promotion Board during this period, 38.4 per cent were women. This trend, if it continues, will have serious effects on replenishment at the D-1 level and above.

9. In order to significantly improve the representation of women in the Secretariat, departments and offices will continue their efforts to increase the rate of women's recruitment and promotion to over 50 per cent of all vacancies. This is particularly important in the case of the P-5 level, as indicated above. This grade level, therefore, will be given particular attention in the development of gender action plans in individual departments and offices. It is projected that 82 staff members, of whom 62 are men, will retire at the P-5 level by 31 December 2000. In order to maximize the opportunity for improving women's representation at this level, heads of departments and offices will be requested to assess the potential candidacies of women from within their departments and executive searches will be conducted to identify women candidates from other departments and offices, as well as from other United Nations system organizations and external sources. Member States, in turn, will be requested to propose women candidates, particularly from unrepresented and under-represented countries.

10. Concerted efforts must be made to increase the rate of women's recruitment at the P-4 to D-1 levels. Data obtained from the Appointment and Promotion Board secretariat indicate that for the period from 1 January 1998 to 30 November 1998, the average recruitment rate for women at these levels was 32.3 per cent, considerably lower than the corresponding promotion rate for women at the same levels of 47.4 per cent. Accordingly, the Secretary-General will hold managers accountable for the development of gender action plans in individual departments and offices, which will include specific targets for the appointment and promotion of women at a level above 50 per cent until the goal of gender balance is reached.

Gender distribution of staff at the Professional and higher levels in organizations of the United Nations system

11. Pursuant to the General Assembly's request in its resolution 52/96, statistics on the gender distribution of Professional and higher-level staff in all organizations of the United Nations common system, as of 31 December 1996, were provided to the General Assembly (A/53/376, annex II). The statistics were provided by the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (CCAQ), which issues annual statistics on the staff of United Nations system organizations. CCAQ is currently validating the personnel statistics of the organizations, as of 31 December 1997, for publication in spring 1999. Gender distribution statistics for staff in all organizations of the United Nations common system, as of 31 December 1997, will also be included in the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session.

12. In order to assess the status of women's representation in organizations of the United Nations system in greater detail, the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women has entered into an agreement with the CCAQ secretariat for the design and production of a series of annual statistical tables on gender. Conclusions drawn from the evaluation of this data, including possible strategies for improving women's representation system-wide, will be submitted to the ACC Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality and provided in future reports of the Secretary-General.

13. Further to its review of gender balance in the organizations of the common system at its spring 1998 session, the International Civil Service Commission, in its report to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session,[1] requested the organizations of the United Nations system to bring the Beijing Platform for Action and the definition of

mainstreaming and its principles to the attention of all managers. The Commission observed that the issue of gender balance had to be part of an organization's overall human resources strategy, and that good management of human resources required that full attention be paid to the gender dimension. The Commission further requested its secretariat to issue a booklet on gender balance in the United Nations system.

14. In view of the considerably lower recruitment rate for women than men system-wide, particularly at levels P-5 and above, where women accounted for only 4.8 per cent of all recruitment during the period 1 January 1992–31 December 1996, the Commission requested the organizations to evaluate their recruitment pools to ensure that women with the requisite qualifications were being presented, and to engage in human resources planning if they were not already doing so. The Commission further requested its secretariat to establish a recruitment source database that targeted nationals from developing countries, particularly under-represented countries and countries with economies in transition. The Commission secretariat was also requested to develop, in collaboration with the organizations, a set of guidelines for those with decision-making responsibilities to support accountability for ensuring gender balance.

III. Update on the measures taken for the achievement of gender equality

Special measures for the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat

15. The revised special measures, which are described in the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session (see A/53/376, sect. III A), are expected to be issued in Spring 1999.

Gender training

16. Following the successful implementation of gender mainstreaming and gender sensitivity training programmes in the Department of Political Affairs, the Economic Commission for Africa, and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, additional training programmes on gender mainstreaming and gender issues in the workplace will be organized for other departments and offices in 1999.

17. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations, with the assistance of the Office of Human Resources Management and the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, is currently preparing a gender training programme for all staff of the department, which will take into account the unique mission of the Department and the diversity of its workforce, which includes both civilian and military personnel. A gender training programme for staff at the United Nations Office at Vienna, originally scheduled to commence in November 1998, will be launched in February 1999. In addition to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the United Nations Office at Vienna, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia are planning to conduct gender mainstreaming and gender sensitivity training for staff at their duty stations.

Amendments to the regulations of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund on the entitlements of surviving spouses, including former spouses divorced from participants

18. In its resolution 53/210, *inter alia*, the General Assembly approved a number of modifications to the regulations of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund which concern the position of spouses, in particular former spouses who were divorced from participants in the Fund and spouses who were married to participants following their retirement.

19. In relation to participants retiring or dying in service on or after 1 April 1999, the regulations have been amended to allow a divorced spouse to request a surviving former spouse's benefit, provided (a) the participant had been married to the former spouse for a continuous period of at least 10 years; (b) the former spouse had not remarried; (c) the participant's death had occurred within 15 years of the date when the divorce had become final, unless at the time of death the participant was under a legal obligation to pay maintenance to the former spouse; (d) the former spouse had reached the age of 40 (otherwise, the benefit entitlement would commence only after that age had been reached); and (e) the participant's pension entitlement from the Fund was not taken into account in a divorce settlement.

20. The Assembly also approved the establishment of an optional payment facility, whereby a portion of a pension benefit due to a participant might be paid to a former spouse, in conformity with a court order relating to maintenance or a divorce decree incorporating a settlement agreement, but only at the request of the participant. This amendment to the regulations is intended to assist participants in honouring maintenance orders or divorce settlements.

21. With respect to spouses married to Fund participants following their retirement, participants will have the option,

as of 1 April 1999, to purchase a prospective survivor's benefit for a spouse married after separation from the Organization.

22. The Assembly also approved the elimination of the provision of the Fund's regulations which required the termination of a surviving spouse's pension benefit upon the remarriage of the widow or widower. As of 1 April 1999, surviving spouses who remarry following the death of a participant will not forfeit their benefit, which will remain payable to them for life.

IV. Work programme for 1999

23. During 1999, priority will be given to the development and implementation of gender action plans in individual departments and offices. These plans will be tailored to the staffing requirements of individual offices, taking into account projected vacancies through the year 2000, including retirements by gender, and the availability of qualified women for inclusion in candidate pools. The objective of these plans will be to develop concrete and practical strategies on a department-by-department basis for implementing the goal of gender balance in the global Secretariat. The establishment and implementation of the gender action plans will also provide the Secretary-General with an important tool for measuring the performance of individual departments and offices, and for ensuring the accountability of individual managers.

24. Continuing attention will also be paid to the reform of human resources management policies and practices in the Secretariat. The Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women will continue to cooperate closely with the Office of Human Resources Management to ensure that the gender dimensions of human resources management policies are fully taken into account in the reform process, and that the institution of new human resources management policies and procedures support measures for achieving the goal of gender equality in the Secretariat.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 30* (A/53/30).

Table 1

Gender distribution of all Professional and higher-level staff with appointments of one year or more in the United Nations Secretariat, by department or office and by grade, as of 30 November 1998[a]

Department/ Office	USG		ASG		D-2		D-1		P-5		P-4		P-3		P-2		P-1		Total		GRAND TOTAL	Percent Women
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
dm/ohrm				1	1	2	2	2	8	12	10	10	10	9	3	5			34	41	75	54.7%
dpi	1				5	1	8	7	17	15	38	37	28	40	24	27			121	127	248	51.2%
dm	1				1		3	2	6	2	3	6	2	2		2			16	14	30	46.7%
unjspf					1		2	1	5	3	7	5	6	7		1			21	17	38	44.7%
dm/oppba			1		4		2	3	6	6	14	14	15	10	9	8			51	41	92	44.6%
ola	1		1		3		5	3	11	6	8	7	10	9	5	8			44	33	77	42.9%
desa	1		1	1	9	3	22	8	35	25	46	36	32	23	13	16			159	112	271	41.3%
osg	3	1	1	1	2	3	6		2	3	4	2	3	5	2	1			23	16	39	41.0%
dgaacs	1		1		2	1	9	5	64	37	132	77	115	91	10	15			334	226	560	40.4%
dda	1				1		1	1	2	3	3	3	2	1	2				12	8	20	40.0%
ohchr		1			1		3	1	10	6	17	4	18	16	7	9			56	37	93	39.8%
undcp	1				2		6	2	19	3	13	8	15	15	4	9			60	37	97	38.1%
unscom								1	1	1	2		1	1	1				5	3	8	37.5%
uncc			1		2		4		2	1	9	4	26	13	15	16			59	34	93	36.6%
dpa	1		2		6	2	6	6	16	6	17	8	11	10	5	4			64	36	100	36.0%
unog	1				2	1	6	3	27	19	71	47	86	32	13	12			206	114	320	35.6%
ocha	1				3		3		11	3	4	4	6	6		2			28	15	43	34.9%
unon							1		4	1	17	7	15	11	7	4			44	23	67	34.3%
oios	1					1	2	2	7	3	19	9	11	3	4	4			44	22	66	33.3%
unfip			1								1	1							2	1	3	33.3%
dpko	1		2		4		10	2	11	5	27	12	17	12	7	6			79	37	116	31.9%
dm/ocss			1		1		4	1	13	3	25	10	25	16	7	5			76	35	111	31.5%
eclac	1				1		6	3	15	4	34	15	23	12	23	13			103	47	150	31.3%
unov					2		3	2	13	5	31	12	20	9	5	5			74	33	107	30.8%
unep	1		2		5	3	23	4	36	4	49	21	31	23	9	13		1	156	69	225	30.7%
escwa	1					1	6		14	3	20	5	7	10	5	4			53	23	76	30.3%
ece	1					1	7	2	13	3	17	6	21	11	7	5			66	28	94	29.8%
escap	1					1	7	1	20	3	31	12	30	12	12	13			101	42	143	29.4%
unchs					2		1	1	6	2	14	4	8	4	1	2			32	13	45	28.9%
unoip	1				1		1		1		2	2			2	1			8	3	11	27.3%
unctad	1		1		2	1	14	2	35	6	37	8	36	25	20	8			146	50	196	25.5%
dpkofaid	2	1	7	1	9		17	1	30	4	105	14	90	44	40	31	2	6	302	102	404	25.2%
eca	1					1	5	3	26	4	36	8	38	13	17	6			123	35	158	22.2%
interorg					12		3		3	1	1	2		1		1			19	5	24	20.8%
cicp					1			1	2		5		3	1					11	2	13	15.4%
Total	25	3	22	4	85	22	198	70	491	202	869	420	761	497	279	256	2	7	2732	1481	4213	35.2%

Source: Office of Human Resources Management data.

[a] Including 11 JIU inspectors of the D-2 grade, all of whom are men.

Table 2

Gender distribution of all Professional and higher-level staff with appointments subject to geographical distribution in the United Nations Secretariat, by department or office and by grade, as of 30 November 1998

Department/ Office	USG		ASG		D-2		D-1		P-5		P-4		P-3		P-2		P-1		Total		Grand Total	% of Women
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
unscom								1											0	1	1	100.0 %
unoip	1								1			2				1			2	3	5	60.0 %
dm/ohrm				1	1	2	2	2	8	12	9	10	10	9	3	5			33	41	74	55.4 %
dpi	1				5	1	8	7	17	15	38	37	28	39	23	27			120	126	246	51.2 %
unjspf							2	1	4	3	6	5	4	6		1			16	16	32	50.0 %
dm	1				1		3	2	6	2	2	6	2	2		2			15	14	29	48.3 %
dgaacs	1		1		2	1	9	5	9	4	3	5	4	9	1	2			30	26	56	46.4 %
undcp	1				1		3	1	6	1	4	7	8	7	3	6			26	22	48	45.8 %
dm/oppba			1		4		2	3	6	6	13	14	14	7	9	8			49	38	87	43.7 %
unog	1				2		5	3	5	5	9	9	18	11	10	10			50	38	88	43.2 %
dpko	1		2		3		8	2	4	5	12	9	10	10	4	6			44	32	76	42.1 %
unep	1				1	1	1		3	1	2	3	1	1	2	2			11	8	19	42.1 %
desa	1		1	1	9	2	20	8	34	25	46	36	30	23	13	16			154	111	265	41.9 %
unon							1			1	4	1	3	2	2	3			10	7	17	41.2 %
dda	1				1		1	1	2	3	3	3	2	1	2				12	8	20	40.0 %
ola	1		1		3		5	3	10	6	7	6	10	7	5	6			42	28	70	40.0 %
ohchr		1			1		3	1	9	6	16	4	14	15	5	4			48	31	79	39.2 %
osg	1	1		1	2	2	5		2	3	4	1	3	2	2	1			19	11	30	36.7 %
dpa	1		2		6	1	6	6	14	6	15	8	11	10	4	3			59	34	93	36.6 %
ocha	1				3		2		9	3	4	3	4	5		2			23	13	36	36.1 %
oios	1						1	2	5	2	13	8	9	3	4	3			33	18	51	35.3 %
unfip			1								1	1							2	1	3	33.3 %
escwa	1					1	6		13	3	17	5	5	9	5	4			47	22	69	31.9 %
escap	1					1	7	1	19	3	26	10	20	10	12	13			85	38	123	30.9 %
unchs					1		1	1	5	2	9	3	6	2	1	2			23	10	33	30.3 %
eclac	1				1		6	3	14	3	33	12	21	10	22	12			98	40	138	29.0 %
dm/ocss			1		1		4	1	12	3	24	8	19	11	7	4			68	27	95	28.4 %
unov					2		2	2	8	3	8	2	9	4	4	2			33	13	46	28.3 %
dpkofald	1						4	1	7	2	4	1	2	2		1			18	7	25	28.0 %
ece	1					1	7	2	13	3	17	6	20	8	7	5			65	25	90	27.8 %
unctad	1		1		1	1	14	2	35	6	37	8	36	24	19	7			144	48	192	25.0 %
eca	1					1	5	3	25	4	35	8	34	11	14	6			114	33	147	22.4 %
cicp					1			1	2		4		3	1					10	2	12	16.7 %
interorg					1				3		1					1			5	1	6	16.7 %
unec			1		1				1										3	0	3	0.0 %
Total	22	2	12	3	54	15	143	65	311	141	426	241	360	261	183	165			1511	893	2404	37.1 %

Source: Office of Human Resources Management data.

Table 3

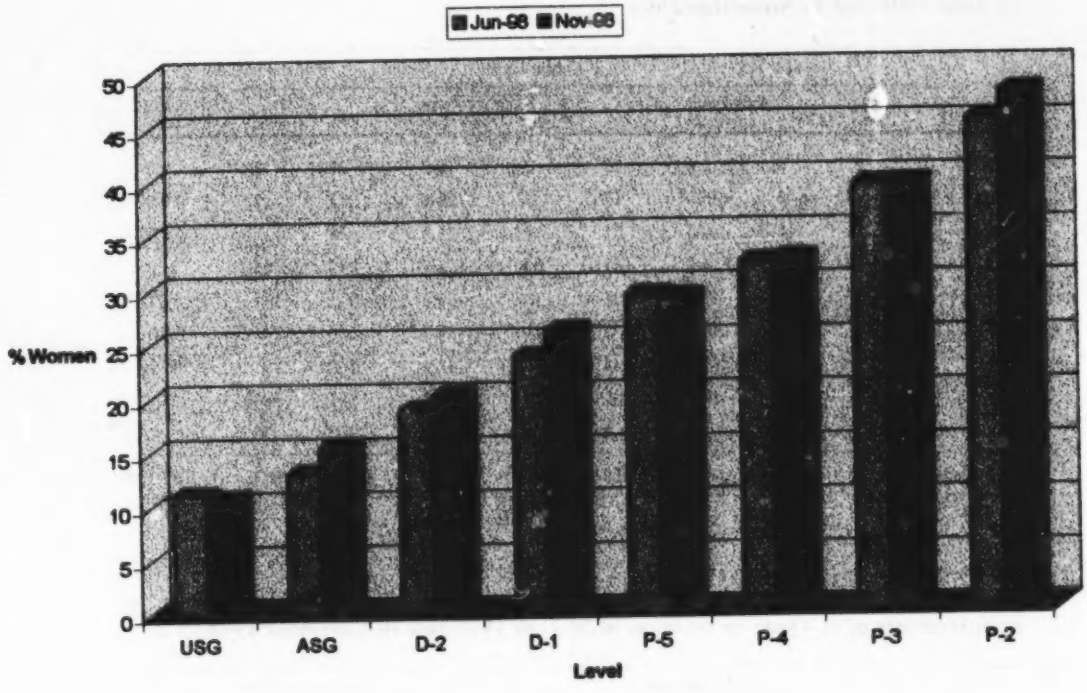
Comparison of the gender distribution of Professional and higher-level staff on appointments subject to geographical distribution, as of 31 December 1997, 30 June 1998 and 30 November 1998

	31 December 1997			*30 June 1998*			*30 November 1998*		
Level	*Men*	*Women*	*Percentage of women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Percentage of women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Percentage of women*
USG	17	1	5.6	22	2	8.3	22	2	8.3
ASG	9	3	25.0	12	3	20.0	12	3	20.0
D-2	51	14	21.5	51	14	21.5	54	15	21.7
D-1	159	51	24.3	149	60	28.7	143	65	31.3
P-5	302	147	32.7	305	139	31.3	311	141	31.2
P-4	442	229	34.1	435	241	35.7	426	241	36.1
P-3	358	259	42.0	348	253	42.1	360	261	42.0
P-2	184	181	49.6	193	173	47.3	183	165	47.4
P-1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**1 522**	**885**	**36.8**	**1 515**	**885**	**36.9**	**1 511**	**893**	**37.1**

Table 4

Comparison of the gender distribution of Professional and higher-level staff with appointments of one year or more, as of 30 June 1998 and 30 November 1998

	30 June 1998			*30 November 1998*		
Level	*Men*	*Women*	*Percentage of women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Percentage of women*
USG	24	3	11.1	25	3	10.7
ASG	20	3	13.0	22	4	15.4
D-2	78	18	18.8	85	22	20.1
D-1	209	65	23.7	198	70	26.1
P-5	483	200	29.3	491	202	29.1
P-4	868	414	32.3	869	420	32.6
P-3	737	480	39.4	761	497	39.5
P-2	299	249	45.4	279	256	47.9
P-1	5	9	64.3	2	7	77.8
Total	**2 723**	**1 441**	**34.6**	**2 732**	**1 481**	**35.2**


Jun-98
Nov-98
% Women
50
45
40
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
USG
ASG
D-2
D-1
P-5
P-4
P-3
P-2
Level